



Press Release

Embargoed 14 May 2013 11AM

Parents speak out on Form 4 results They blame government and teachers for failures

14 May 2013, Dar es Salaam: Parents perceive a downward trend in the quality of secondary schooling, and largely blame the government and teachers for the decline. Parents urge the government to increase the number of teachers who are better qualified and properly paid in order to improve education in Tanzania.

These findings were released in a Twaweza brief titled *Form Four Examination Results: Citizens report on the learning crisis in Tanzania*. The brief is based on data from Sauti za Wananchi, a nationally representative mobile phone survey of households across mainland Tanzania. Respondents were asked questions about their views on education, and to identify challenges and ways to improve. The views were sought from 18 March to 3 April 2013 before the recent announcement by the government of the annulment of the 2012 Form Four results.

Of all those surveyed, almost 7 out of 10 citizens (68%) were aware that the Form Four results for 2012 had been published. Respondents overwhelmingly perceived a decline in the quality of secondary education in the past 10 years with about 8 out of 10 citizens (83%) indicating that they felt education had deteriorated. This is consistent with official statistics including the Ministry of Education's Basic Education Statistics in Tanzania (BEST).

When probed further, parents reported a shortage of textbooks for their children. At primary level 6 out of 10 parents (55%) report that their children have no textbooks; at secondary level, 5 out of 10 (54%) report that their children have two or more textbooks. However secondary school students are expected to have a minimum of one textbook per subject for between six and nine subjects. Despite this, when parents were asked to identify the main obstacle to children passing examinations less than 1 out of 10 (3%) pointed to a lack of resources at school.

Twaweza believes that engaged and involved parents can help to improve children's learning levels. When asked to identify who was most responsible for recent failures, parents themselves were pinpointed, but only by 3% of respondents. Additionally, when asked about their level of engagement in their children's education, the majority of parents responded positively. About 6 out of 10 parents (64%) reported having inspected their child's exercise book in the past week, and 4 out of 10 (41%) reported helping with their child's homework during the same period.

Parents themselves largely focused on teachers and various associated issues as the primary reasons for the recent failures and as critical to improving education. More than half of the parents interviewed suggested that, to improve the education system, the government should either increase number, quality or salary of teachers and ensure they were paid on time. This corresponded to obstacles identified by parents to children passing exams. On average, 5 out of 10 parents (54%) with children in

primary or secondary school cited low teacher motivation, qualification or number. Correspondingly, 3 out of 10 parents (34%) blamed teachers for the recent examination failures, second only to government which was blamed by about 4 out of 10 parents (38%).

Elvis Mushi, Researcher at Twaweza, commented on the findings: *“Parents are clearly aware that the education system is failing their children. They are trying to play an active role in their children’s education and are asking teachers and the government to do the same.”*

A positive result of the recent publication of the 2012 Form Four results is that it has led to a national debate, by citizens, in the media and in policy circles, about the state of education in Tanzania. This brief provides the most recent nationally representative data and citizens’ views on education to this debate.

Rakesh Rajani, Head of Twaweza, said *“Through Sauti za Wananchi we are able to quickly and scientifically hear the views of citizens on the issues impacting their lives. Parents have clearly spoken out on the recent Form Four results. From their perspective it is clear that motivating and holding teachers to account are the keys to improving education in the country.”*

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Notes to Editors

- More details, including the full brief and JPEGs of the charts in the brief for use by media, are available at www.twaweza.org/sauti
- Twaweza is a ten year citizen-centered initiative, focusing on large-scale change in East Africa. Twaweza believes that lasting change requires bottom-up action, and seeks to foster conditions and expand opportunities through which millions of people can get information and make change happen in their own communities directly and by holding government to account.
- Uwazi at Twaweza works to 'liberate' data and information so as to better inform public discussion. Uwazi’s mission is to enable key actors to have access to timely, reliable, relevant and easy to understand information and analyses which enhance public debate and accountability, and that contribute to citizen agency and action.
- You can follow Twaweza’s work

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